

took place. Indra continued :— “Once Ambarīṣa sent Sudeva to subdue the asuras and giants. Sudeva entered the battlefield and looked at the vast army of the enemy. Finding that it was impossible to defeat the army of giants, he sat down and meditated on Śiva, who appeared before him and encouraged him. A fierce battle followed in which Sudeva annihilated the army of the giants completely and he himself met with a heroic death. That is how he obtained heaven. (M.B. Dākṣiṇātyapāṭha, Śānti Parva, Chapter 98).

SUDEVA III. The son of Haryaśva, the King of Kāśī. He was quite valiant and radiant. After the death of his father he was anointed as King of Kāśī. As soon as he became King, the sons of King Vīṭahavya attacked Sudeva and captured him. After this Divodāsa became the King of Kāśī. (M.B. Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 30, Verse 13).

SUDEVA IV. A famous King. Nābhāga married Suprabhā the daughter of this King Sudeva. The following is a story taken from Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna stating how this Sudeva who was a Kṣatriya by birth, became a Vaiśya by the curse of hermit Pramati.

Once Nala, the friend of Sudeva, and the relative of Dhūmrākṣa, after having drunk too much liquor, tried to rape the wife of the hermit Pramati. All this happened while King Sudeva was standing silently near Nala. Pramati requested King Sudeva repeatedly to save his wife. Sudeva replied : “The Kṣatriya who could help the needy, could save your wife also. But I am a Vaiśya.” This arrogance of the King made the hermit angry. “May you become a Vaiśya.” The hermit cursed the King. Sudeva repented and requested for liberation from the curse. “When a Kṣatriya steals away your daughter you will recover the lost feelings of Kṣatriya.” The hermit gave this liberation from the curse.

Because of this curse Nābhāga stole away Suprabhā the daughter of Sudeva and Sudeva got back the lost feelings of Kṣatriya.

SUDEVĀ I. A daughter of the King of Aṅga named Ariha. The King Rkṣa was her son. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 95, Verse 24).

SUDEVĀ II. A princess born in the dynasty of King Daśārha. Vikuṅṭha, a King of the Pūru dynasty married Sudevā. The King Ajamīḍha was their son. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 95, Verse 36).

SUDEVĀ III. The wife of Ikṣvāku who was the son of Manu. This Sudevā was the daughter of Devarāta the King of Kāśī. Ikṣvāku and Sudevā are said to be the incarnations of Viṣṇu and Devī Lakṣmī respectively. While the couple were walking about in the forest, they saw a she-hog. That hog was the cursed form of a Brahmin woman named Sudevā. Sudevā, the wife of Ikṣvāku gave the merits she had earned in one year by her good deeds to Sudevā the she-hog and liberated her from her curse. This story occurs in Padma Purāṇa Bhūmikhaṇḍa, Chapter 42. The story is given below: Once King Ikṣvāku and his wife Sudevā were hunting on the banks of the Gaṅgā. Then a big hog came there with his wife and children. The hog was afraid of Ikṣvāku. So he said to his wife:—“Look! beloved! Ikṣvāku the valiant, the son of Manu, is come for hunting. I am going to fight with him.” His wife said. “How did you get this bravery to fight with the king, you who always try to evade the forest-men?” “It is not

bravery, my love. It is because I could go to heaven if I fight with the king valiantly and meet with heroic death”, replied the hog. The wife tried her utmost to dissuade her husband from his attempt. The children also tried to stop him. They could not change his mind. So all of them decided to help him as much as they could in his fight. They got ready for a fight against Ikṣvāku and his army.

The king’s army saw the preparations of the hogs and their resolute stand. Struck with fear, they informed Ikṣvāku about it. The king ordered the noble hog to be caught. Ikṣvāku and his wife mounted on horse and followed the army. All the hounds ran towards the hogs barking. The army sent a volley of arrows at the hogs. The hog and his wife stopped the arrows. The army could not defeat the hogs. At last the king himself killed the hog with a club. While the king was looking on, that noble hog was changed to a noble Gandharva with four hands and divine clothes and ornaments. Leaving his old body of hog on the earth he rose up into the sky like the Sun and went to heaven. Seeing this sight Sudevā was struck with fear. She got down from the chariot and called the wife of the hog towards her. The wife of the hog, wounded all over, came to the queen Sudevā. Sudevā asked her about the previous history of her dead husband. The hog’s wife said: “Lady! If you feel interested I shall tell you about the previous life of my dead husband and myself.”

“My dead husband was a Gandharva named Raṅkavidyādhara, in the previous birth. Once he sat in the shade of a tree near the hermitage of Pulastya and began to sing with accompaniment. As the singing caused disturbance to his solitude the hermit Pulastya came and requested the Gandharva to shift to some other place. Raṅkavidyādhara did not like to comply with the request of the hermit. At last Pulastya removed his hermitage to another place. Raṅkavidyādhara walked in search of Pulastya. Finally the Gandharva saw Pulastya. Seeing that he was alone, the Gandharva took the shape of a hog and entered the hermitage and began to wound with his tusk and to molest that radiant sage Pulastya. Thinking it to be a mere animal Pulastya suffered it for a long time. The hog continued its actions of molestation. It passed excrements in front of the sage, danced before him, played in front of him, fell down in the courtyard and rolled and did various other things. As it was an animal Pulastya forgave him. One day Raṅkavidyādhara entered the hermitage as a hog, roared aloud, laughed aloud, cried aloud, sang aloud and in various other ways tried to change the mind of the hermit. Seeing all these, Pulastya began to think that it was not a hog. “A hog will not try to molest one continuously. I forgave him thinking him to be a mere animal. This must be that wicked Gandharva.” Thus recognizing him Pulastya got angry and cursed him thus: “You tried to violate my penance in the shape of a hog. So you, great sinner; take the next birth as a hog.” With grief the Gandharva ran to Indra and informed him of everything. Indra requested Pulastya to liberate the Gandharva from the curse. Accordingly Pulastya gave him remission that he would regain his original form when he was killed by the hands of the immensely good king Ikṣvāku.”